



# Policy Brief

## Key messages

Nigeria's Youths are, in particular, the vital resource in the country's development. The future prospects of Nigerian Youth are inextricably tied to the development of Nigeria. "Without the youth, there can be no future". This is not different in Osun State, where the population of the youth stands at 2,577,637mil (49.8%) of the estimated population of 5,179,720 million in 2019. This 49.8% falls between ages 15-45, which is the productivity age. Also, 1,690,811 million (33%) of the 2019 estimated Osun population falls between ages 18-35, as stated by the 2009 National Youth Policy that youth ranges between 18-35. However, Budget processes, plan and implementation are seen overtime to have little or no contribution of the youth and little to do with youth. The interest of the Osun youth is all too often seen to be represented in all ministry as it a cliché that "Youths Are Everywhere", but these demographics of young people often ends up been nowhere and are often neglected because of the government budgetary policy directions and priorities. This is not only putting the state in a state of anomy but leaving the youth in a state of dismal. Equitable and effective democracy requires citizens' participation most especially the young citizens. No person can better articulate the needs of the youth more than them, no one knows the youth more than the youth. There can be no meaningful youth budgeting without a proper identification of the genuine socioeconomic needs of the youths and adequate allocation of resources towards achieving targeted outcomes or youth contributing to the planning and preparation of the budget. Technocrats or economists are needed to only help the youth put things in perspective against the background of budget technicalities and in competition with other demands.

## SEEING FROM THE YOUTH PERSPECTIVE: YOUTH FOCUSED AND PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

### Introduction

Budget is a financial document prepared at the end of each fiscal year with the expected expenditures of the entire nation or state. It mainly includes the sources of revenue and expected expenditure on employees of the national or state governments as well as the projects initiated by the national or state governments<sup>1</sup>. Budget is universally accepted as a powerful tool for achieving development objectives, and act as an indicator of commitment to stated government policy. It is arguably the most important policy of government. More than any other policy document, it reflects government's values and priorities, in that it is an articulation of support (or lack of support) for specific measures and activities through the distribution of public finances. Essentially, among all the policy positions adopted by government and its ministries, those which are matched with an allocation in the budget can be regarded as priorities. This demonstrates the government's seriousness in responding to persisting development challenges<sup>2</sup> and or implementation of social, political and economic priorities over a given period<sup>3</sup>.

In Nigeria, the preparation of the budget is a shared responsibility of the Executive and Legislative arm of the Government. At the federal level, section 81, subsection (1) of the 1999 constitution stipulates that:

*"The President shall cause to be prepared and laid before each House of the National Assembly at any time in each financial year estimates of the revenues and expenditure of the Federation for the next following financial year".*

While at the state level, section 121. Subsection (1) stipulates that:

*“The Governor shall cause to be prepared and laid before the House of Assembly at any time before the commencement of each financial year estimates of the revenues and expenditure of the State for the next following financial year”.*

The budget, which is officially referred to as the Appropriation Act, is introduced by the Executive, approved by the Legislature and signed into law by the President or Governor as applicable.

Budgeting as the procedures and mechanism by which budget is prepared, implemented and monitored and it is one of the most important areas of policymaking that is crucial for the economic development of any nation and budgets are extremely important documents. They act as instruments for implementing the provisions in the international, regional and national conventions leading to achieving the promotion of the welfare of youths.

Budget processes all over the world share four common purposes<sup>4</sup> in which Osun State also share as part of her six generic iterative budget processes’ stages<sup>5</sup>.

- Policy review
- Strategic planning
- Budget preparation
- Budget execution
- Accounting and monitoring
- Reporting and auditing

In Osun State, the idea of budgeting was seen as very technical and remained in the domain of the economists and financial experts, which is awfully shrouded in secrecy. As shown in the Osun State Budget Manual, “the State Government of Osun budget is always based on the four (4) principles, which are as follows”<sup>6</sup>:

- The budget must encompass all the fiscal operations of State Government of Osun and must also force policy decisions having financial implications to be made against the background of a hard budget constraint and in competition with other demands;
- The total amount of money State Government of Osun spends should be closely aligned to what is affordable over the medium term, and in turn with the annual budget. Therefore, a budget derived from unbiased projections of both revenue and expenditure;
- State Government of Osun expenditures reflect government priorities as articulated in the development plan (and similar policy documents) and operationalized in the Medium-Term Sector Strategies. Therefore, Government resources will be allocated to only activities with clear outputs and service delivery contributing to the attainment of the targets set by the Government in the development plans and/or medium-term strategies;
- The resources allocated to each organisational level should be utilised in efficient and effective manner to

produce intended results at least cost and best quality; and

- The development plans, sector strategies and costing, assumptions and basis for fiscal forecasts, and financial performance reports be accessible, clear and communicated to the wider community for their input. Also, decision makers both members of Executive Council and House of Assembly should have all relevant issues and information before them when they make decisions.

As against the fourth principle, budget processes were seen overtime to have little or no contribution of the youth and little to do with youth. The interest of the Osun youth is all too often seen to be represented in all ministry as it a cliché that “Youths Are Everywhere”, but these demographics of young people often ends up been nowhere and are often neglected because of the government budgetary policy directions and priorities.

According to National Population Commission (NPC) response to information request filed by Kimpact using the Freedom of Information Act, 2011 estimated Osun’s population to be 5,179,720 million in 2019<sup>7</sup>. 1,690,811 million (33%) of the 2019 estimated Osun population falls between ages 18-35, as stated by the 2009 National Youth Policy that youth ranges between 18-35. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) posited that productivity age ranges between 15-45<sup>8</sup>. 2,577,637mil (49.8%) of the estimated population falls between ages 15-45.

These numbers are really massive and across the globe, young women and men are making an important contribution as productive workers, entrepreneurs, consumers, citizens, members of society and agents of change but all too often, the full potential of young people is not realized because they are affected by socioeconomic challenges. Although they are an asset, simply, many young people face high levels of economic and social uncertainty that ordinarily should be the priority of a forward minded government because in all levels, the youth supposedly are the centre of reconstruction and development. Poor investments on youths related issues reflect the low priority many governments attach to youth development when it comes to budget planning and implementation.

The long-lasting consequences of investing in the youth would not only be on the youth but also on their families and communities at large. The neglect of vulnerable youths and youth – street youths and youth, orphans, migrant youths and youth, those trafficked and/or sexually abused – in policy and budgeting underscores the need for guidelines on youth responsive budgeting.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- **PRIORITIZING “UNHEARD” VOICES: THE YOUTH SHOULD BE INVOLVED AT ALL STAGES OF THE BUDGET PROCESSES.**

Equitable and effective democracy requires citizens’ participation most especially the young citizens. No person can better articulate the needs of the youth more than them, no one knows the youth more than the youth. There can be no meaningful youth budgeting without a proper identification of the genuine socioeconomic needs of the youths and adequate allocation of resources towards achieving targeted outcomes or youth contributing to the planning and preparation of the budget. Technocrats or economists are needed to only help the youth put things in perspective against the background of budget technicalities and in competition with other demands.

Youth-focused budgeting is a central means to ensure that youths obtain equitable outcomes from development processes, which needs to start with Participatory Youth Budgeting: this is a situation where youths’ involvement in budget analysis, budget formulation, tracking expenditure against allocation and assessing the effectiveness of expenditure in relation to outcomes. The aspiration of the youth budgeting process is that youths’ involvement in budget analysis, formulation and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) will address the neglect of youth issues such as education, access to healthcare, agriculture, employment etc. This form of budgeting clarifies the budget process, so that youths can better understand government processes, and participate and contribute to make government

budgeting more relevant and responsive to needs of youths. This would allow the mainstreaming of youth concerns into government financial planning processes and could easily be replicated at the national level. Ultimately, technocrats and economists with their expertise coordinates the aggregation of the needs of the youth.

Better outcomes in any sector, for instance in education, health, agriculture, commerce/industry, youth development, rural development depend not just on allocations but also on actual execution and proper use of those allocations. The execution and proper use of budgeted funds can be improved through social accountability. Citizens, including young citizens, are needed in participatory budgeting, public expenditure tracking, monitoring public service delivery, lobbying and embarking on advocacy campaigns.

Institutionalising youths’ participation in budget analysis, advocacy and assessing allocation, expenditure and impact at a much larger scale:

- can have transformational impacts in the equitable distribution of resources for youths in development planning; and
- opens the eyes of youths to inequities in development planning, and motivates and enables their agency in striving for social equity; this ultimately enhances youth skills and confidence to participate more fully and effectively in public life.

## TENETS OF PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

While various versions of participatory youth budgeting have been adapted in different locales, there are some principles that underlie the core of the process. This is underpinned by the interaction of four principles: voice, vote, social justice, and oversight<sup>9</sup>.

- **Voice:** The Youth having a voice (Active citizen participation) shows the government how they can be creative on how they empower the youth. In the end, the voice should be sustainable.
- **Vote:** Voting is the mechanism of decision-making authority. “When citizens are able to make binding

decisions that affect public resources and state authority, there is heightened interest in the program.”

- **Social Justice:** This involves “harnessing the resources, expertise, and authority of the local state” to provide sustained change<sup>10</sup>.
- **Oversight:** Oversight involves greater citizen awareness, transparency, and input about the actions and policies of local government. This is a difficult tenet to operationalize because it involves more fundamental change to the way governments operate.

## MODELS THAT HAVE WORKED IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS

These various models were adapted in different areas but still shows how youth perspective on budgeting can help integrate youth priorities, through assessment of needs of youths within a sector and the translation of those needs into financial value. This involves participation in budget programmes to ensure that youth-specific expenditure is costed into budgeting through evidence-based processes.

- **THE YOUTH BUDGET INITIATIVE, GHANA<sup>11</sup>**

**The project:** Plan Ghana, in co-operation with the Social Development Centre, formulated the youth budget process as a pilot for replication in other West African countries. The project trained youths in budget advocacy, and created the Youth Budget Advocacy Group of Awutu-Senya District (Y-BAGAS).

**Method:** Ten young men and women aged 12–30 were selected for the project. Analysis of budgeting was linked to a rights-based approach and the study of international human

rights instruments that formed the basis of identifying state priorities for youths. Through the training, youths could understand the budget cycle, local and national budget documents, and how these can be influenced at each stage in the process. Participants also learnt means of calculating growth rates and engaging in trend analysis of budget figures. Brainstorming and group exercises highlighted the implications of budgets for vulnerable groups, especially women and youths.

Subsequent engagement of these youths in a forum of civil society organisations to inform Ghana's 2011 budget statement resulted in their voices being heard at the national level. This reportedly led to the retention of critical programmes – such as the Youth in Agriculture programme – due to the advocacy of youth budget groups. Local authorities, too, began attaching greater importance to views of youths, as their level of skills in data analysis and advocacy increased.

- **YOUTH BUDGETS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, UGANDA<sup>12</sup>**

The project: This national Ugandan example aims to tackle negative youth outcomes through pro-youth budgeting, which is envisaged to address high levels of youth unemployment despite consistent economic growth.

## REFERENCES

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3. Gender-Responsive Budgeting and Parliament (2008), A handbook for Nigerian Legislators, Centre for Democracy and Development
4. Ngwira, 2000
5. Osun State budget manual (July, 2018)
6. Ibid., 10
7. National Population Commission Osun State 2019 Population Estimate
8. <https://data.oecd.org/pop/working-age-population.htm>
9. Wampler, B. 2012. "Participatory Budgeting: Core Principles and Key Impacts." Journal of Public Deliberation 8 (2): 1–13. Article 12. [Google Scholar]

The project was based on the acknowledgement by the government of the negative implications for the economy if youths are not productive. The government recognised that, to effectively address the challenges and capitalise on the benefits of youth, it must prioritise youth throughout the national budgeting process. The 'Youth Budget Prioritization – the Way to Go document is a budget analysis paper by the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs (UPFYA) and analyses the various sections and sectors of the budget with specific youth priority allocations.

- **PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN BOSTON AND BEYOND<sup>13</sup>**

The year 2015-16 marks the third year of Youth Lead the Change: Participatory Budgeting Boston. As with the program's first two years, young people from across the city were asked to suggest ideas for capital projects that will bring long-term physical improvements to parks, streets, schools, and neighbourhoods on city-owned property. Youth volunteers, called Change Agents, reviewed the ideas and turned them into proposals. The final proposed infrastructure projects needed to benefit the public, cost at least \$25,000, and have a lifespan of at least five years. Then young people from throughout Boston voted on their top priorities for funding.

10. ibid
11. CHARLOTTE BANI-AFUDEGO, GEORGE COBBINAH YORKE and ANASTASIE ABLAVI KOUDOH (2012), Seeing from our perspectives: youth budget advocacy in Ghana "Participatory learning and actions"
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## TALK TO US

+2348103947690,  
[info@kimpact.org.ng](mailto:info@kimpact.org.ng),  
[www.kdi.org.ng](http://www.kdi.org.ng),  
[@KDI\\_ng](https://twitter.com/KDI_ng).

